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## Possible etymology of the generic name *Magumma* for the Anianiau (Drepanidini)

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The Anianiau is a small yellow bird belonging to the cardueline finch tribe Drepanidini that is endemic to the Hawaiian island of Kauai. It was first described by Stejneger (1887) as *Himatione parva*, before that genus was restricted to the Apapane *H. sanguinea*. It has since usually been associated with the amakihi and has been moved around with them in the genera *Chlorodrepanis*, *Loxops* and most recently *Hemignathus*. Other authors have been uncomfortable with this and have sought to remove the Anianiau to its own genus or at least disassociate it from amakihi. Molecular evidence supports this, as in a phylogeny derived from mtDNA sequences the species is well removed from the amakihi (Fleischer *et al.* 2001), and Pratt (2001: 81) opined that it 'should be removed from [*Hemignathus*] and placed in its own genus *Magumma*.'

In the introduction to their book on Hawaiian birds, Wilson & Evans (1899: xxi) stated: '*Himatione parva*, though having a straight bill, Mr. Perkins now wishes to keep apart from *Oreomyza*, and to place it in a genus by itself as *Rothschildia parva* ...'. Richmond (1902: 713) gave the authorship of *Rothschildia* as 'Perkins in Wilson and Evans,' but Perkins (1903: 411) disavowed ever having any intention of proposing such a genus. Regardless, *Rothschildia* as it appeared in Wilson & Evans (1899) is preoccupied by *Rothschildia* Grote (1896: 204) used for a genus of

Lepidoptera. There was also a subsequent use of *Rotschildia* (*sic*, *lapsus*) in Amphibia (Mocquard 1905).

Mathews (1925: 93), in a spate of 17 new genera, proposed the generic name *Magumma* as a replacement for *Rotschildia*, with *Himatione parva* Stejneger as the type. He gave no explanation of the meanings of any of the new names. If not pure nonsense, what could be the derivation of the uncouth word *Magumma*?

Gregory M. Mathews was one of the most notorious and prolific generic splitters in the history of ornithology, proposing about 536 new generic names (M. D. Bruce *in litt.* 29 June 2002). To maintain his furious pace he had to strain mightily and many of his names were etymologically dreadful, but there often seems to be some sort of reasoning behind them (e.g. *Tomirdus*, named for Tom Iredale and used for the rail now known as *Rallina tricolor*).

One device of the desperate word coiner is to resort to anagrams. The letters of *Magumma* can be rearranged in only one way that spells something recognisable—*gamma mu*, the Greek letters equivalent in Latin to *G* and *M*. They also happen to be the initials of Gregory Mathews. Though it cannot be proved, it appears that Mathews may have cryptically named this new genus for himself.

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